

REMARKS

Applicants request entry of the present amendments which conform the claims to U.S. practice. No new matter is being introduced by this Amendment as antecedent support is set forth in the original specification and in the original claims.

Prosecution on the merits is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' Attorneys at the below-listed telephone number regarding this Preliminary Amendment or otherwise regarding the present application.

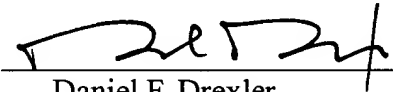
If there are any charges with respect to this Amendment or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130 maintained by Applicants' attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION

A marked up version of the paragraph replaced on the second page of the specification follows.

“The invention [is characterised in the Claims 1 and 2] provides a sound shielding element for protection from the propagation of sound from the noise area of a room or space into a neighbouring room or space. [Accordingly, the] The sound shielding element comprises at least one panel or layer having a thickness of layer between 0.01 and 50 mm, particularly between 0.05 and 4 mm. Its perforations present an average diameter or an average width between 0.001 and 2 mm, particularly 0.01 and 0.7 mm, and a hole or perforation surface share, related to the total surface of the mounting parts - also referred to as hole/surface ratio" - between 0.001 and 20 %, particularly between 0.01 and 5 %, including the range 0.1 - 3 %, for instance.”

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-34 are amended herein as follows.

1. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element for protection from the propagation of sound from [the] a noise area of a room or space into a neighbouring room or space, comprising:

at least one panel [(1)] or layer[, respectively, including many]; and a plurality of small perforations [(2),] formed in said at least one panel or layer;
[characterised by the following dimensioning:

a. the] wherein an average diameter [(D)] or [the] width [(b)] of said perforations [(2)] ranges between 0.001 and 2 mm[;

b. the] and a hole/surface ratio [(LV)] ranges between 0.001 and 20 %.

2. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to Claim 1, wherein said sound shielding element is adapted to [for] cover[ing] sound-reflecting and/or generating structural parts[, comprising at least one panel (1) or layer including many small perforations (2),

characterised by the following dimensioning:

- a. the average diameter (D) or the width (b) of said perforations (2) ranges between 0.001 and 2 mm;
- b. the hole/surface ratio (LV) ranges between 0.001 and 20 %].

3. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to Claim 1 [or 2],

[characterised in

that] wherein said panel [(1)] has a thickness [(d)] between 0.05 and 4 mm, and wherein the [an] average diameter [(D)] or [an] average width [(b)] is between 0.01 and 0.7 mm and [a] the hole/surface ratio [(LV)] is between 0.01 and 5 %.

4. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to [any of the preceding Claims] Claim 1,

[characterised in

that] wherein said panel [(2)] or layer is made of polypropylene [(PP)].

5. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to [any of the preceding Claims] Claim 1,

[characterised in

that] wherein said perforations [(2)] are configured as narrow or fine slots[, respectively,] having [a] width [(b)] between 0.02 and 0.18 mm and a length [(l)] between 0.02 and 30 mm.

6. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to Claim 5,

[characterised in

that] wherein said slots have [a] width [(b)] between 0.08 and 0.15 mm and [a] slot length [(l)] between 0.8 and 2.2 mm and are disposed at an offset at a spacing [(a₁)] transversely to [their] a longitudinal extension by less than half the slot length [(l)].

7. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to [any of the preceding Claims] Claim 1,

[characterised in

that] wherein said panel [(1)] is configured as a three-dimensionally shaped moulded part and is injection-moulded or pressed from synthetic material.

8. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1[-6],

[characterised in

that] wherein said panel [(1)] or layer is three-dimensionally shaped without cutting by stretching.

9. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1[-6],

[characterised in

that] wherein said panel [(1)] or layer is deep-drawn from a planar plate, board, tape, strip or sheet.

10. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 7[-9],

[characterised in

that] wherein said moulded part presents a thickness [(6)] between 0.05 and 4 mm, particularly between 0.2 and 1 mm.

11. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to Claim 10,

[characterised in

that] wherein said panel [(1)] or layer is provided with said perforations [(2)] in a sieve-like or raster-like form.

12. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to [any of the preceding Claims] Claim 1,

[characterised in

that] wherein said panel [(1)] or layer [that said panel (1) or layer consists of] comprises aluminium, steel sheet, ceramic or a highly temperature-resistant synthetic material.

13. (Amended/Marked up) Sound shielding element according to [any of the preceding Claims] Claim 1,

[characterised in

that] wherein said panel [(1)] or layer is used as a covering layer on a sound-absorbing layer [consisting, for instance, of] including a nonwoven fabric or foamed material or on a chamber-type or membrane-type absorber, and presents [a] the hole/surface ratio between 3 and 10 % and an average hole diameter between 0.1 and 0.5mm.

14. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the preceding Claims] Claim 1, wherein said element is used as an injection-moulded operating element.

15. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is used as roof lining in [the] a passenger compartment of motor vehicles.

16. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is used on [the] an underbody lining of motor vehicles.

17. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is used as an injection-moulded cover unit for covering cables [and the like].

18. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is a [as] wheel case shell on motor vehicles.

19. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is a [as] hat rack in motor vehicles.

20. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is a [as] seat cover in motor vehicles.

21. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element a [as] door lining.

22. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is an [as] absorbing tube for [the exhaust gas system, for the ventilation system or any other] air-conducting tubes.

23. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is a [as] decorative wheel shield or [as] engine bonnet lining of motor vehicles.

24. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is a [as] cover for covering at least one part of an internal combustion engine.

25. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is a [as] luggage trunk cover[, e.g. in the form of a blind].

26. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is a [as] thermal shielding element.

27. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s]Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein said element is a [as] covering layer on honey-comb composite panels.

28. (Amended/Marked up) [Application of the] [s] Sound shielding element according to [any of the] Claim[s] 1 [to 13], wherein at least two said panels [in combination with further panels (1) that] are spaced from each other and disposed in a substantially parallel arrangement.

29. (Amended/Marked up) Method of producing a sound shielding element for protection from the propagation of sound from a noise area of a room or space into a neighbouring room or space, the sound shielding element including at least one panel or layer and a plurality of small perforations formed in said at least one panel or layer, wherein an average diameter or width of said perforations ranges between 0.001 and 2 mm and a hole/surface ratio ranges between 0.001 and 20 %, the method comprising: [according to any of the Claims 1 to 13,
characterised in

that] forming said panel [(1)] or layer [is produced] by fusing or bonding particles or [fibres] fibers.

30. (Amended/Marked up) Method of producing a sound shielding element according to [any of the Claims 1 to 13] Claim 29,

[characterised in

that] wherein said [perforated] panel [(1)] or layer is produced by weaving threads formed of [fibres] fibers.

31. (Amended/Marked up) Method of producing a sound shielding element according to [any of the Claims 1 to 13] Claim 29,

[characterised in

that] wherein said panel is produced by impregnating a textile tissue [is impregnated] with a thermoplastic material and [moulded to assume] molding into a three-dimensional shape.

32. (Amended/Marked up) Method of producing a sound shielding element according to [any of the Claims 1 to 13] Claim 29,

[characterised in

that] wherein said plurality of perforations [(2) in said panel (1) or layer] are produced by electric discharges using an electric arc through said panel [(1)] or layer[, respectively].

33 (Amended/Marked up) Method of producing a sound shielding element according to [any of the Claims 1 to 13] Claim 29,

[characterised in

that] wherein said plurality of perforations [(2) in said panel (1) or layer] are produced by bombardment of [the latter] said panel or layer with particles.

34. (Amended/Marked up) Method of producing a sound shielding element according to [any of the Claims 1 to 13] Claim 29,

[characterised in

that] wherein said plurality of perforations [(2) in said panel (1) or layer] are produced by means of a needle or cutter blocks [and/or needle- or cutter-carrying boards].